

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-18 and 32 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 3-10, 13 and 16 are amended. The amendments introduce no new matter. Claim 2 is canceled without prejudice to, or disclaimer of, the subject matter recited in that claim. A Request for Continued Examination is attached. Reconsideration of the application based on the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

The Office Action, on page 2, rejects claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Without conceding the propriety of this rejection, claim 1 is amended to obviate this rejection. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

The Office Action, on page 3, rejects claims 1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2006/0154248 to McGrew et al. (hereinafter "McGrew"). The Office Action, on page 5, rejects claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over McGrew in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,658,732 to Ebersole et al. (hereinafter "Ebersole"). The Office Action, on page 6, rejects claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over McGrew in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0033700 to Takeuchi et al. (hereinafter "Takeuchi"). The Office Action, on page 7, rejects claims 6 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over McGrew in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,605,662 to Heller et al. (hereinafter "Heller"). The Office Action, on page 8, rejects claims 9, 12, 15 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over McGrew in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0214200 to Thompson et al. (hereinafter "Thompson"). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

The Office Action, on page 3, asserts that McGrew teaches a sensor array device with features that are alleged to correspond to the combination of all of the features previously recited in independent claim 1, dependent claim 4 and now-canceled claim 2. The Office

Action, on page 6, asserts that McGrew and Takeuchi, in combination, would have rendered obvious the combination of all of the features recited in dependent claim 5. Without conceding the propriety of these rejections, among other features, claim 1 is amended to recite, the support consists of a thin area surrounded by a thick area and the vibration areas are positioned at the thin area, wherein each vibration area has a vibration-generating part having a first electrode and a second electrode between which a piezoelectric/electrostrictive element is sandwiched, and wherein the vibration-generation part is on the upper or lower surface of the thin area. The applied references, individually or in combination, do not teach, nor can they reasonably be considered to have suggested, these features.

For example, McGrew does not teach the support consists of a thin area surrounded by a thick area, as recited in claim 1. With reference to Figs. 4a-4e, the Office Action asserts that McGrew teaches a substrate with a thin layer surrounded by a thick area. McGrew teaches a substrate 24 with electrode strips 404 and 420, a hole-containing layer 412, and an elastic polymer membrane 408 (paragraphs [0083]-[0089]). McGrew, however, does not disclose a support consists of a thin area surrounded by a thick area. Additionally, any alleged thin area disclosed by McGrew is not surrounded by a thick area. For example, the alleged thin area, the electrode strips 412, are layer strips that extend the whole distance across the substrate. As such, it is unreasonable to assert that, even under the Office Action's interpretation, any alleged thin area is surrounded by a thick area, as recited in claim 1.

Ebersole, Takeuchi, Heller and Thompson are not applied in any manner by the Office Action to overcome the above-identified shortfalls in the application of McGrew to the subject matter of the pending claims.

For at least the foregoing reasons, the applied references, individually or in combination, do not teach, nor can they reasonably be considered to have suggested, the combination of all of the features recited in independent claim 1. Additionally, claims 3-18

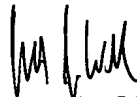
and 32 are also not taught, nor would they have been suggested, by the applied references for at least the respective dependence of these claims, directly or indirectly, on an allowable base claim, as well as for the separately patentable subject matter that each of these claims recites.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1, 3-18 and 32 under 35 U.S.C. §§102(e) and 103(a) as being anticipated by, or unpatentable over, the applied references are respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1, 3-18 and 32 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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JAO:CJW/clf

Attachments:

Request for Continued Examination
Petition for Extension of Time

Date: January 25, 2008

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